DTM AFGHANISTAN
RETURNEE LONGITUDINAL SURVEY (RLS)

DTM IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

Funded by the European Union

ROUND 3 - December 2021

Unemployment status was reported by more than half of respondents (51%) during Round 3 of the Returnee Longitudinal Survey (RLS). Results showed that the majority of the interviewees continued to heavily rely on various mechanisms to cope with food insecurity. A total of 666 returnees from Turkey and the EU participated in Round 3 of RLS.

The RLS is a tool developed under the European Union (EU) funded project “Displacement Tracking Matrix Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (DTM REMAP)” to improve understanding of return migrants’ profiles, the living conditions of returnees and their reintegration process both in the short- and long-term. To this end, data is collected over the course of multiple years at regular intervals.

This report provides a snapshot of the third round of RLS data collection, as well as a comparison of data that was collected among those returnees who also participated in the second round (September-October 2021). Round 3 of RLS data collection took place between 4 December 2021 and 1 January 2022 with Afghan migrants who returned from Turkey or the EU between January 2018 and July 2021. 666 returnees (577 from Turkey and 89 from the EU) were interviewed in-person and over the phone across 92 districts in 15 provinces.

The employment status of the respondents did not significantly change between September-October and December 2021. In both rounds, 51 per cent reported they were unemployed. Respondents working for daily wages also remained stable during the second and third round (30% and 29% respectively). Respondents who were self-employed decreased from 14 per cent to 12 per cent.

Participants were asked if their employment status changed in the six months prior to the interview in order to determine some of the changes in employment trends since the international troop withdrawal, which occurred in August 2021. The largest share of respondents (41%) reported that they were still unemployed and 10 per cent said they lost their job and did not get a new job in the last six months. Thirty-eight per cent indicated they were still at the same job. Among those that lost their job in the last six months, 64 per cent stated that they lost their job because their employer stopped activities and 24 per cent because they closed down their own business. Finally, those who reported being unemployed or had lost their job in the last six months were also asked if they had participated in some daily wage work since their unemployment. Among those, 39 per cent said they worked in daily wages and did so on average eight days per month.

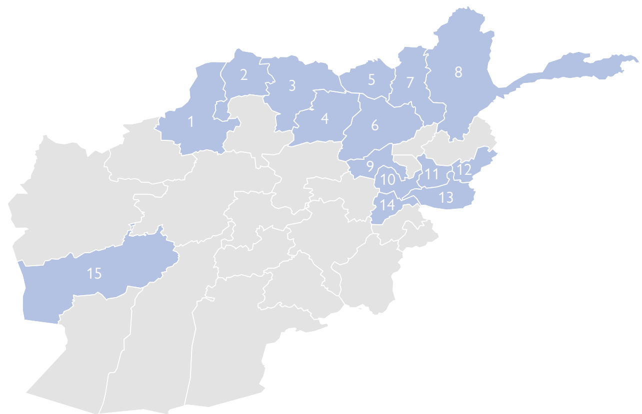
KEY FIGURES

666 Total respondents

577 Respondents who returned from Turkey

89 Respondents who returned from the EU

TARGET PROVINCES

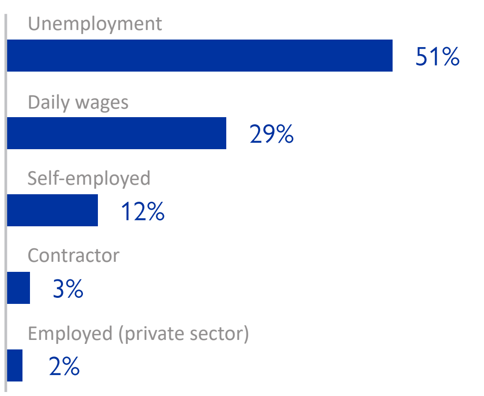


1. Faryab
2. Jawzjan
3. Balkh
4. Samangan
5. Kunduz
6. Baghlan
7. Takhar
8. Badakhshan
9. Parwan
10. Kabul
11. Laghman
12. Kunar
13. Nangarhar
14. Logar
15. Farah

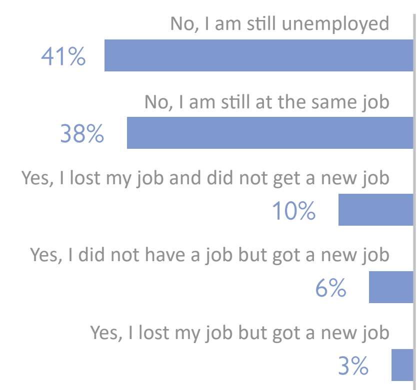
Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM or the United Nations.

EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

What is your current employment status? (top 5 answers)

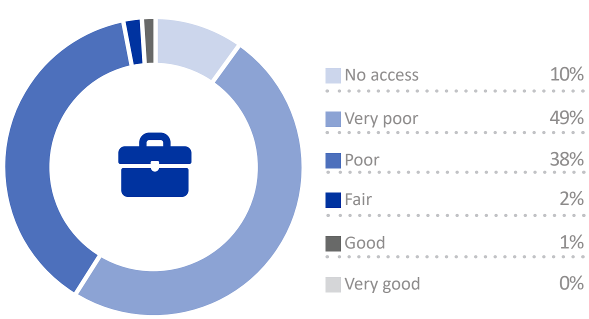


Has your employment status changed in the past six months? (top 5 answers)

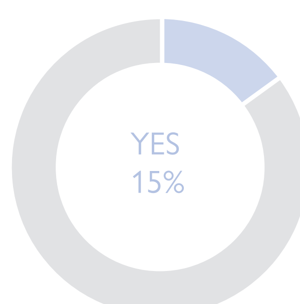


If you are unemployed, have you participated in daily wages since your unemployment?[1]

How would you rate your access to employment opportunities during the last six months?



Are children under 18 in your household working?



[1] This question was only answered if the respondent answered “I am still unemployed” or “I lost my job and did not get a new job”

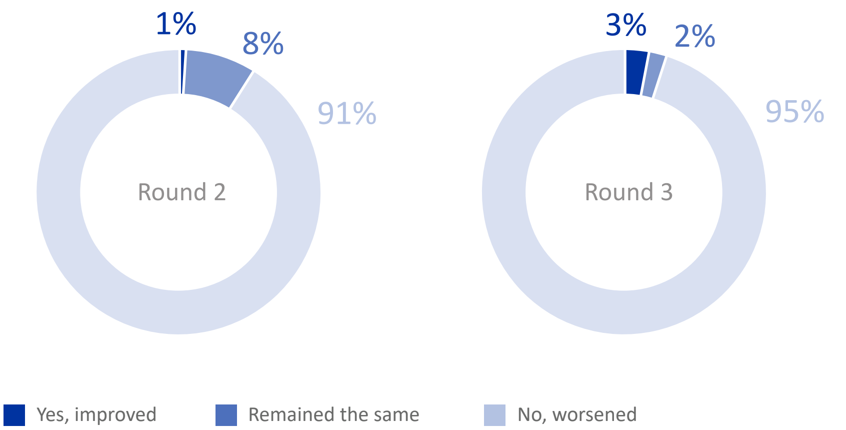
DISCLAIMER: This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the EU.

At the time of the interview, 95 per cent of participants said that their personal economic situation had worsened in the last six months, compared to 91 per cent in the second round. Three per cent reported an improvement in their income compared to one per cent in the second round. Finally, only two per cent indicated that their income remained the same, which decreased from eight per cent during the second round.

While the number of respondents who reported having no income decreased between Round 2 and Round 3 and those earning between 1 and 44 USD increased between Round 2 and Round 3, respondents earning 45 to 89 USD decreased from 23 to 8 per cent in the third round. This shows that the income of respondents decreased between October and December 2021. Moreover, it should be noted that the Afghan currency declined significantly in value between both rounds[2], which resulted in lower purchasing power for Afghan household, who are already situated in low income brackets.

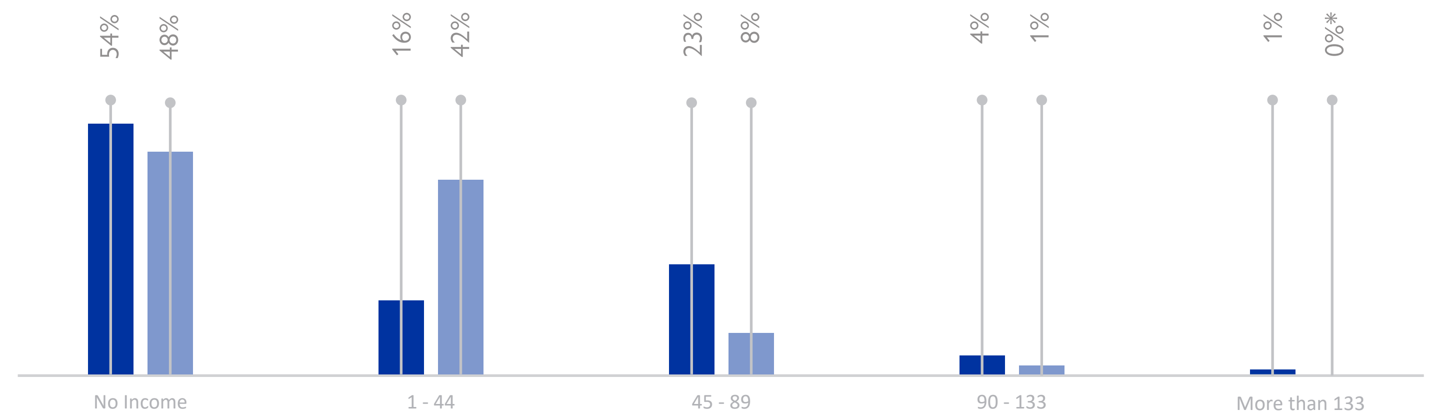
PERSONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION

Has your personal economic situation improved in the last six months?



INCOME

What is your personal monthly average income (in USD)[2]?

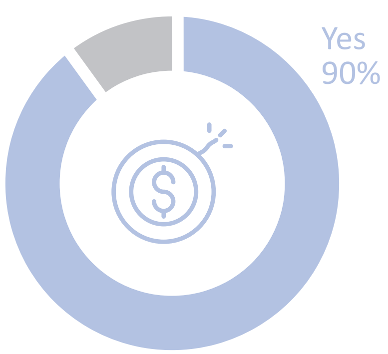


*Percentages do not include the answers "I do not know" and "I do not want to answer"

Round 2 Round 3

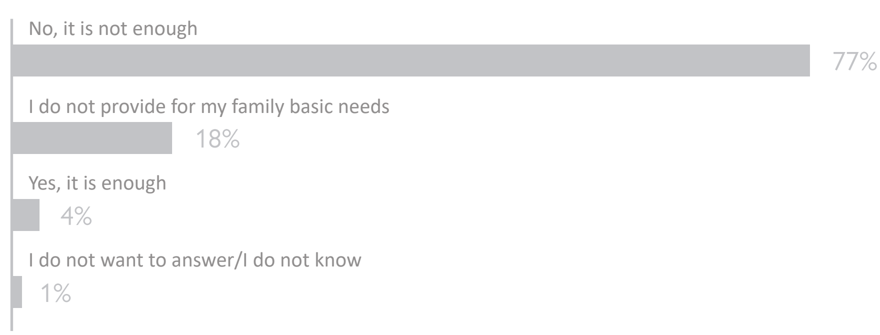
DEBT

Have you borrowed money to cover personal monthly expenses?



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Is the household's monthly income enough to provide for your family's basic needs?

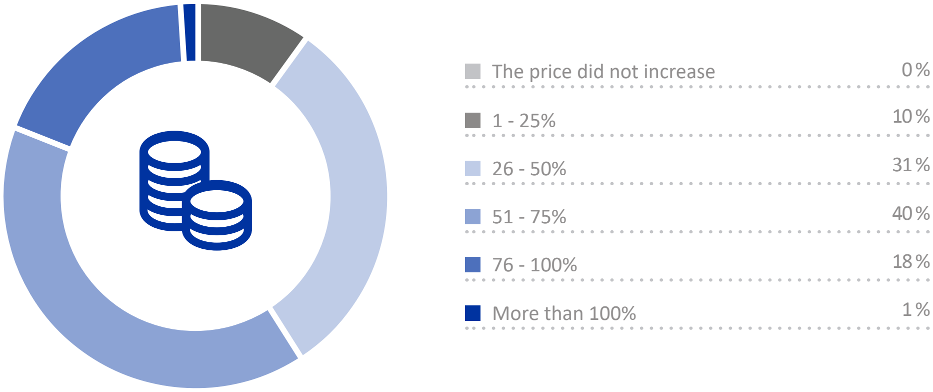


Ninety per cent of respondents borrowed money to cover personal monthly expenses during the six months prior to the interview. In addition, respondents provided insights into their household income situation. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents indicated that the monthly income was not enough to provide for their family's basic needs. Only four per cent of respondents reported that the income was sufficient.

[2]Data was originally collected in Afghani. Exchange rates are 87.88 AFN to 1 USD during the second round (1 October 2021) and 112.45 AFN to 1 USD during the third round (15 December 2021) according to the UN Operational Rates of Exchange.

FOOD PRICES

How much did the price of your food consumption increase in the last six months[3]?



All respondents to the survey reported an increase in food prices during the last six months (June - November 2021). More than half of respondents (59%) indicated a rise in prices of more than 50 per cent, 31 per cent reported an increase between 26 and 50 per cent and only ten per cent reported a rise between 1 and 25 per cent.

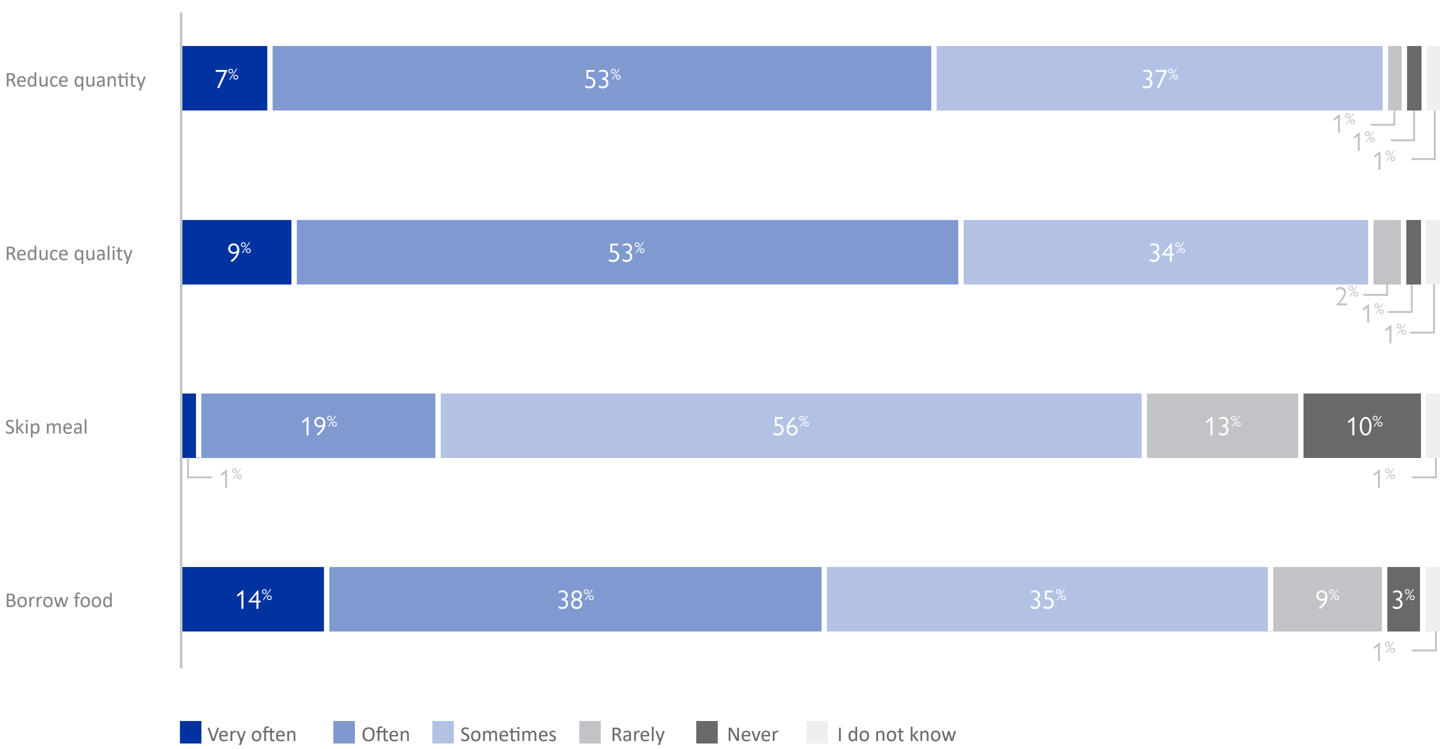
This is in line with the results of Round 14 of the Community-Based Needs Assessment (CBNA), where 98 per cent of assessed communities reported an increase in prices of all commodities, including food, such as cooking oil, rice and flour. The rise in prices of commodities, including food, is most likely due to the inflation of the Afghan currency and the high dependency of Afghanistan on imports[4].

FOOD INSECURITY

The vulnerability of Afghanistan to conflict and natural disasters often results in high levels of food insecurity. Households in Afghanistan frequently rely on different mechanisms to cope with food insecurity and scarcity. These coping mechanisms range from reducing the quantity and quality of their diet to skipping meals and borrowing food.

Nearly all respondents (98%) reported they had to reduce the quantity of their food consumption, compared to 97 per cent during the second round. However, during the second round, a larger share of respondents (79%) reported they had to reduce the quantity of food on a regular basis (very often or often) in contrast to the third round (60%). A large majority of respondents (96%) also relied on borrowing food to cope with food insecurity, compared to 98 per cent during the previous round. Those relying on borrowing food on a regular basis (very often and often) decreased from 67 to 52 per cent during the third round. Respondents also relied on reducing the quality of food (98%) and skipping a meal (89%). Twenty per cent of those that skipped a meal did so on a regular basis (very often and often).

How often did you have to reduce the quantity/quality of your food, skip meals or borrow food?



[3]The last six months include June - November 2021.
[4]International Organization for Migration (2021). *Community-Based Needs Assessment: Summary Results Round 14 (November - December 2021)*. Available at https://dtm.iom.int/reports/cbna-r14-%E2%80%94-afghanistan-%E2%80%94-community-based-needs-assessment-summary-results-november%E2%80%94december

During the second and third round of RLS data collection, around two-thirds (64% and 63% respectively) of respondents answered affirmatively to the ability to stay and live in Afghanistan. However, when asked if they had the intention to re-migrate in the next six months, 27 per cent had the intention to do so, compared to 17 per cent in the previous round. This is an increase of 10 per cent, showing a growth of interest among respondents in the past few months to migrate abroad.

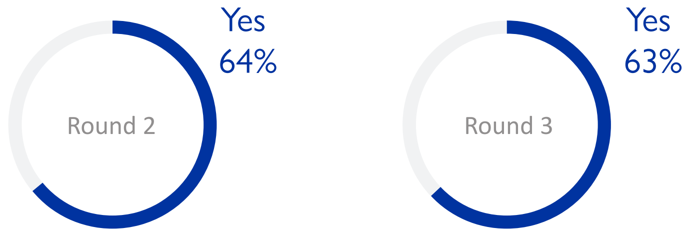
Among those intending to leave Afghanistan in the next six months, 80 per cent cited that their primary reason for wanting to do so was because of the lack of jobs in Afghanistan. Nine per cent of respondents cited a lack of security as a primary reason to re-migrate, while five per cent cited higher incomes abroad. Two per cent wanted to migrate for better education and two per cent because they missed their family and/or friends abroad.

Nearly one third (28%) of respondents indicated a lack of security as the secondary reason to leave Afghanistan. Twenty-three per cent wanted to re-migrate because incomes are higher abroad, while 17 per cent of respondents answered they did not see a future for themselves in Afghanistan and therefore wanted to go abroad. Ten per cent indicated lack of jobs as a secondary reason and another nine per cent wanted to re-migrate because they wanted to clear their debt.

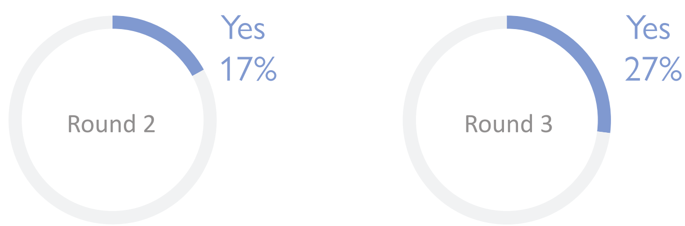
The primary reasons show that a lack of jobs is the most important reason for respondents to leave Afghanistan in the next six months. The secondary reasons demonstrate that a lack of security and higher incomes abroad are supposedly important drivers to re-migrate.

RE-MIGRATION

Do you feel you are able to stay and live in Afghanistan?



Do you have the intention to migrate from Afghanistan in the next six months?



REASONS FOR RE-MIGRATION

If you have the intention to re-migrate in the next six months, why do you want to re-migrate (top 5 reasons)?

PRIMARY REASON

Lack of jobs	80%
Lack of security	9%
Incomes are higher abroad	5%
Better education	2%
I miss my family/friends elsewhere	2%

SECONDARY REASON

Lack of security	28%
Incomes are higher abroad	23%
I do not see a future in Afghanistan	17%
Lack of jobs	10%
To clear debt	9%